

# Draft

## NORTH CAROLINA

## OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

### 2009 - 2013



November 2008

Division of Parks and Recreation

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources



# **INTRODUCTION**

North Carolina has been blessed with a rich and varied tapestry of lands and waters. The landscape stretches from the Tidewater's ocean beaches, sounds and marshes westward through flat Coastal Plain swamp forests to the rolling Piedmont and on to ancient and hauntingly beautiful mountains, well-known and loved not just by North Carolinians, but by millions of Americans nationwide. Traversing and connecting this landscape are beautiful rivers and streams. These lands and waters provide not only breathtaking scenery and magnificent settings for outdoor recreation, but also serve to support a rich diversity of plant and animal life. North Carolina is indeed "Naturally Wonderful".

## **STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN LEGAL MANDATE**

Since passage of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965, preparation of a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) has been required in order for states to be eligible for LWCF acquisition and development assistance. Past SCORPs and this edition have provided a coordinated framework addressing the problems, needs, and opportunities related to the need for improved public outdoor recreation. The N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, the state agency with authority to represent and act for the state for purposes of the LWCF Act, prepared this plan.

The plan contents and format are shaped by the planning guidelines of the LWCF Act. The major requirements are comprehensiveness; an evaluation of the demand for and supply of outdoor recreation resources and facilities in the state; a wetlands priority component; a program for implementation of the plan; ample public participation in the planning process; and a description of process and methodology. The plan has been prepared to both meet requirements for continuing LWCF eligibility and meet the need for meaningful evaluation of state and local government public outdoor recreation projects.

Chapter I presents the issues identified for 2008-2013. The issues were developed through the work of the Joint Legislative Commission on Land and Water Conservation. The commission met five times and held three public meetings across the state and submitted its report in January 2007. The results of the public meetings, attended by over 750 people including 189 people who spoke, are presented in Appendix C.

Chapter II contains an estimate of the demand for outdoor recreation using data about recreation participation in North Carolina based on survey responses from over 3,000 state residents. In 2007, the Division of Parks and Recreation contracted with the U.S. Forest Service Southeast Experiment Station to analyze the responses from North Carolinians to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE). The NSRE is continues a series of national recreation participation surveys conducted about

every five years since 1965. The current version was conducted from 2002-2007 via random-digit telephone dialing and includes over 90,000 responses across the United States.

Chapter III reports the results of an inventory of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities in North Carolina and makes comparisons county by county and statewide. Detailed county profiles are provided in Appendix A. LWCF assistance will be awarded to counties showing higher relative needs using the state's Open Project Selection Process.

Chapter IV identifies trends affecting outdoor recreation and the concomitant changes they will bring. Chapter V describes the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, local, private, and commercial outdoor recreation providers in the state.

Chapter VI contains the federally mandated wetlands component, developed in coordination with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. Chapter VII includes actions the state will be undertaking over the next five years to address the issues and needs identified in this plan.

While the level of LWCF apportionments recently available to North Carolina has lessened the LWCF program's impact, LWCF funds still serve to address issues of statewide importance and to help improve outdoor recreation in North Carolina.

Ample public participation, described in the document, went into development of this plan. A final draft plan was also made available via the internet for public review and comment.